

STINGER

The Official Magazine of the 180th Fighter Wing
Vol. 58, Issue No. 2, June 2020



STINGER

Vol. 58, Issue No. 02, June 2020

180th Fighter Wing
2660 South Eber Road
Swanton, Ohio 43558-9645

COMMAND

Wing Commander
Col. Michael DiDio
Vice Commander
Col. Randall Ortiz

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Public Affairs Officer
Capt. Matthew Eck
Public Affairs Superintendent
Senior Master Sgt. Elizabeth Holliker
Editor
Senior Master Sgt. Elizabeth Holliker
Photojournalist
Tech. Sgt. John Wilkes
Tech. Sgt. Alexis Landry
Staff Sgt. Hope Geiger
Broadcast Journalist
Senior Airman Kregg York

DEADLINE

Deadline for the next Stinger is the Sunday of August RSD @ 3 p.m. Hand deliver articles to the Public Affairs Office in Building 114 or e-mail: usaf.oh.180-fw.list.pa@mail.mil. For more information call ext. 4072

ABOUT THE STINGER

The Stinger, a funded Air Force newspaper, is an authorized publication for the personnel of the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, 2660 S. Eber Road, Swanton, Ohio 43558. Contents of The Stinger are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force, the National Guard Bureau or the Adjutant General of Ohio. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 180th Public Affairs Office.



Contents

Editorials

Commander's Comments
Rapid Response to Unprecedented Events
3

Features

Airman Finds Success in Avionics Field
5

Locked & Loaded
180FW Takes Aim at Green Flag-West
6

End of a Generation
40 Years of Service
11

Connecting a Community
Ohio Airman uses Photography to Raise Spirits
12

Farewell & Welcome
Retirements Bring Change to Leadership
16

ONG on Front Lines During COVID-19
18

It Won't Go Without TMO
20

Life-Long Struggles bring Life-Changing Opportunities
28

Healthy Vision
Enhances Warfighter Health & Readiness
34

Extras

Live Fire Training
23

180FW Ready When Called
24

CNGB Visits 180FW
34

Promotions & Retirements
38

Commander's Comments



Rapid Response to Unprecedented Events

On Valentine's Day weekend, 2020, in a packed hotel conference room, in Columbus, Ohio, our State Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. John C. Harris, was hosting the annual Ohio National Guard Senior Leaders Conference, with every senior leader from the Ohio National Guard, both Air and Army, in attendance. The main room easily had at least 250 uniformed leaders, grouped together to hear about current issues going on in the state, and to hear revered guest speakers share their stories of combat heroism and resilience.

The last session, of the last day, included a short discussion on "State Active Duty", and the challenges in utilizing this status when units are tasked with assisting state civil authorities during localized times of crisis. By this time of the conference schedule, not many attendees were taking notes anymore; in the background, attendees were staring at their phones, reading news stories of a mysterious virus quickly spreading in pockets of China and on cruise ships

currently underway in various parts of the world.

The conference ended, and everyone raced home to salvage what was left of their Valentine's Day weekend. Little did we know what was looming just a few weeks after this meeting concluded. I can personally attest that most attendees at this conference would not have been able to explain "social distancing," "20-second handwashing," "contact tracing" or show their skill wearing a face covering to protect themselves and others from possible asymptomatic virus spreading. As if the quick state active duty discussion was a precursor of things to come, the Ohio National Guard's response to the COVID-19 pandemic quickly escalated to include several hundred members supporting various civil needs throughout the state of Ohio, both on federal and state active duty orders.

In late March, 2020, 180FW Mission Support Group eaders were activated to provide expert liaison as-

Continued on pg. 4

COMMENTS from pg. 3

sistance between our local city governments, state and federal military contacts, and local health care infrastructure for regional status reporting, peak infection resource planning, and associated logistical and contractual support. The Army and Air National Guard's medical staff were dispatched to provide critical care expertise to several Ohio prisons and nursing homes, requiring our specially trained members to utilize their skills in highly contagious and very unorthodox conditions. Some of these same medical specialties have again been called upon to perform COVID-19 testing for all Ohio nursing home employees, to ensure workers are free from the virus, and to provide accurate continued statewide virus statistical tracking.

Additional mobilizations have sent several hundred Ohio National Guard members to assist with food bank efforts all over the state, providing a much needed service to communities hit hard by pandemic unemployment and associated family needs. The Wing Command Chief recently visited the Toledo food banks and observed the National Guard presence to be hard-working, motivated, reassuring to the community and committed to their mission of providing much needed sustenance to those adjacent communities. This last weekend, the 180FW Security Forces Flight mobilized 20 Defenders with all

required gear and vehicles to augment local authorities dealing with civil unrest in various Ohio cities in absolute minimum time. The initial call came in on Saturday morning, May 30, and our Defenders arrived at their assigned duty station by 9:30 on Sunday night, May 31, ready to assume post if needed - An absolutely awesome display of ANG mobility!

In addition to these incredible responses to our roles as home-state supporters to civil authorities, our federal taskings and matching readiness did not waiver one iota. Our Aerospace Control Alert detachment implemented sterilization techniques and special duty scheduling to decrease infection risk, and maintained 100% readiness throughout all phases of the pandemic - no interruptions!

The wing's Maintenance Group continued their preparations for upcoming deployments by enhancing all assigned aircraft with software upgrades that fully utilize recently installed hardware, increasing awareness and lethality for our aircrews as they train for upcoming real-world overseas taskings. These upgrades were accomplished during the pandemic, while simultaneously maintaining F-16 fleet-leading mission capable rates - again!

It's also worth noting the support and logistical tail required to make all of these accomplishments happen; special instructions need to be received, interpreted and forward-

ed. Pay Orders need to be generated, gear and supplies issued, transportation and lodging arranged. Rules of engagement need to be communicated, CDC Guidelines briefed, as well as follow-up and tracking procedures implemented.

All of these actions and activations were made possible by the equally motivated personnel behind the scenes, working arduously, either on base, or from home, due to pandemic teleworking requirements. The wing is also preparing several hundred members to support upcoming deployments later this year, in support of missions all over the world - a truly impressive effort by all!

These collective efforts have brought the 180FW to present-day conditions by fulfilling our federal and state missions with diligent excellence.

No one knows when these unprecedented state requirements will cease, and our preparations for federal obligations endure, but from what wing leadership has seen so far, Stingers are up to the task.

We are leading from the front, and accomplishing our missions, both State and federal, with fervor and determination. Stingers just don't know any other way!

Please keep up the great work - I am proud to say I serve shoulder to shoulder with all of you! 🇺🇸

Airman finds Success in Avionics Field

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker



Critical thinking and problem solving are desired skillsets employers often look for when hiring employees, but for Fighter Aircraft Integrated Avionics Specialists, these skills can be matter of life, death and mission success.

For Staff Sgt. Mario Bynum, an F-16 Fighting Falcon Integrated Avionics Technician, assigned to the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing, critical thinking when troubleshooting the fighter jet's highly sophisticated avionics systems is a favorite part of his job.

Processing information quickly and making decisive decisions are crucial skills fighter pilots need to execute the mission and it is the advanced electronic warfare capabilities within the aircraft's integrated avionics systems that provide immediate information to

the pilots.

"Avionics is important because it integrates all systems together, allowing us to complete the mission," said Bynum.

Avionics technicians ensure that pilots are able to receive needed information through high-tech communication systems and flight controls.

Using a vast library of technical data, avionics technicians maintain more than 10 integrated systems including attack control radar, infrared and laser instruments and displays, flight controls, navigation, radio and satellite communications, as well as defensive and offensive identification and electronic warfare systems.

"My job consists of operational and functional checks and troubleshooting of the avionics

systems," said Bynum. "We are responsible for the programming, maintenance and repair of these systems."

Bynum joined the 180FW in 2015 as a part-time guardsman, choosing the avionics field because the skillset can allow him to easily transition into the civilian aviation sector.

Throughout his five year military career, Bynum excelled in and developed a passion for the field, leading him to change to his career path and becoming a fulltime member of the 180FW avionics team in 2018.

"Trust your process and don't race with anyone else, but yourself," said Bynum. "I try not to think about things too much when it comes to my goals and where I want to be."

Continued on pg. 32



LOCKED & LOADED 180FW Takes Aim at Green Flag-West

Story & Photos by Senior Airman Kregg York





An Army convoy is driving through the desert when they run into an ambush. Enemy vehicles and tanks threaten the lives of soldiers on the ground. While taking cover, a Joint Terminal Attack Coordinator grabs his radio and calls for air support. Moments later, the roar of an F-16 fighter jet engine can be heard overhead. U.S. Air Force pilots arrive, dropping bombs and taking out their targets.

The smoke clears. The shooting stops. The attack is over. As the F-16s fly away, the soldiers are safe and can continue their mission.

This kind of coordination is no easy feat. Pilots in the air and soldiers on the ground, trying to pinpoint the location of the aggressors and dropping munitions, all while in close range of friendly soldiers. That's where exercises like

Green Flag-West come in.

"Green Flag is a joint exercise where the Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Reserves can come and participate with the Army and practice live fires as well as dry attacks, to see how we can coordinate and function cohesively in combat," said Lt. Col. Brian Moran, 112th Fighter Squadron Commander assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing.

190 Airmen from the 180FW deployed to Nellis Air Force Base, in February, to take part in the exercise.

Conducted by the 549th Training Squadron, Green Flag exercises have been going on for more than 35 years.

The focus of the exercise is to improve interoperability between the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force

by coordinating close air support efforts.

"We fly from Nellis Air Force Base across Mount Charleston, over into a restricted area in California, right over Death Valley," Moran said. "We immediately start working with different agencies on the radio, coordinating where we're going, what we're doing, similar to how we would overseas, so we get to practice those skills. Then we show up in our airspace and immediately start talking to the guys on the ground and working with them."

Working with the JTACS on the ground, the pilots can pinpoint their targets and take them out from the skies at altitudes as high as 20,000 feet.

"The training we've been exposed to on the ranges here is just amazing," said Maj. Roy Poor,

180FW F-16 pilot and project officer for Green Flag-West, "with several thousand actual Army people down south in the National Training Center "fight" and hundreds of pieces of real armor. They actually have real threat replications for surface-to-air missile systems that are attempting to target us, and that gives us a chance to also target them. It's great training for visual recognition in a congested airspace environment that we would expect to see overseas."

"The main focus of our close-air-support has always been a small-scale, small-team, small-kind of fight, very centralized and localized, where this is exposure to something we're not used to," Poor continued. "But, it's a very important skill for us to have for future taskings."

Before the pilots can step to

their planes, the planes need to be prepped and ready to go. That's where the 180FW maintenance teams come in.

"Maintenance plays a pretty heavy role," said 2nd Lt. Brandon Cole, a maintenance officer assigned to the 180FW. "Our job is to make sure the aircraft are mission capable for the entire exercise. So, we look at what inspections need to be accomplished and what heavy maintenance needs to be done, anything that gives those JTACs the ability to call in close air support. Without maintenance on the ground doing that, they wouldn't have the ability to call in that support."

Maintenance did just that. They were able to execute 220 sorties, while maintaining a 90% mission capable rating throughout the exercise, compared to the National

Guard standard of 70%.

Being able to produce mission capable rates like this doesn't come without challenges. With large-scale operations utilizing assets from multiple organizations, communication can become a large hurdle to overcome.

"It's vitally important that each of the units are talking to each other, between maintenance and Logistics Readiness Squadron and making sure the fuel trucks know when to be out here to fuel the jets, making sure weapons and munitions know when to load the bombs and get them loaded to the aircraft," Cole said. "It's a pretty big challenge continually integrating within an active duty setting, as well."

Nellis AFB has one of the busiest runways in the Air Force. With several different organizations and

multiple trainings and missions going on simultaneously, it can be difficult to coordinate resources through multiple sections.

“Running into issues here, and being able to troubleshoot them and figure out better ways to improve on it will help us be prepared for whatever comes in the future,” said Airman First Class Brandon Moore, a crew chief assigned to the 180FW.

By the end of the training, pilots logged more than 400 mission hours, shooting 22,000 20mm rounds and dropping 70 bombs, including the Guided Bomb Unit 38 and 31 V1, Dummy Bomb Unit 56 and four Mark 82 Live bombs.

“Overall, it’s been really good training, and I’ve been very proud

of the way everyone showed up and stepped up to the plate to make it happen once we were here,” Poor said.

“The pilots of the 112th Fighter Squadron were very willing to learn, and that did surprise me a little,” said Lt. Col. Aaron Piepkorn, the team chief and operations supervisor for Green Flag-West. “Many times, when we have such an experienced squadron come to Green Flag, there is an attitude of ‘we know it all,’ but that was not true of the 112th. The willingness-to-learn attitude was great and I think it made a significant difference in their ability to get better as a squadron.”

Realistic trainings like Green Flag-

West ensure the 180FW maintains the highest levels of proficiency and readiness for worldwide deployment.

“Training is really the only way to get better,” Moran said. “So, if we just show up and think that we can figure something out by brute force, it doesn’t work that way. We have to be willing to open up our books and set ourselves up to be critiqued.” 🦅



End of a Generation: 40 Years of Service

Story by Senior Airman Kregg York

Master Sgt. Mark Cramer has been in the Air Force for more than 40 years, enlisting in 1978. Jimmy Carter was in office, a gallon of gas was 63 cents and the first Garfield comic was published.

“I am probably the oldest certified weapons crew chief at 59 years old.”

Cramer is a weapons loader assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing. But, he’s not just any weapons loader. He is one of the oldest weapons loaders in the entire Air Force.

“Normally, someone of my age is in a supervisory position,” Cramer said. “Less hands-on, and more

office work.”

While a supervisory position might suit some people, Cramer would rather keep working with his hands.

“I really enjoy working around the aircraft,” Cramer said. “It’s a lot of fun, especially when the weather is good. There’s not so many personnel issues to deal with.”

As a weapons loader, Cramer makes sure that the weapons systems on the aircraft are in proper working order and ready for the pilots to complete their

Continued on pg. 39



Connecting a Community

Ohio Airman uses photography to raise spirits and donations for COVID-19 relief

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

As the new novel coronavirus continues to sweep across the country and stay-at-home orders are extended, many Americans are feeling the stress of isolation as they stay home to stay safe.

In Ohio, the story is much the same, with the stay-at-home order in place until May 1, 2020, and schools closed for the remainder of the academic year, in an effort to flatten the curve, stop the spread and keep Ohioans safe.

For Ohio National Guard Airman, Staff Sgt. Nathan Rumbaugh, a weapons loader assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, using his extra time at home was a great way to brush up on his photography skills.

"I have always dreamed of having a job that would allow me to use my love of photography and design to help make life better for others," said Rumbaugh. "Then I saw a news

story of an east coast photographer capturing photos on their front porches and "I thought why not try this in Toledo."

Not only did Rumabugh want to engage the community through photography, he wanted to help the community and those in need as the stresses of COVID-19 continue to impact daily lives, straining access to critical needs like food and necessities.

"I wanted to do something to help," said Rumbaugh. "And this is a way to also get people outside, boost morale, lift spirits and give people something fun to look forward to, at the same time."

Partnering with the United Way of Greater Toledo, Rumbaugh officially launched the Toledo Front Steps Project in April, 2020.

"We are so proud of individuals like Nathan, who have stepped up

and asked themselves, 'How can I help during this time?'" said Wendy Pestrue, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Toledo. "It shows that anyone in our community can use their skills to give back in some capacity. The dollars raised will go on to support United Way's Emergency Response Fund, which will help community-based organizations serve those in need during this crisis."

"The Toledo Front Steps Project is a simple, yet fun and creative way to connect our community with a snapshot in time, a keepsake from this historical time in our history," said Rumbaugh. "But the project is also engaging the community to support those in need by donating to the United Way of Greater Toledo."

While it isn't your normal, hour-long, family portrait session at a beautiful outdoor location,

Rumbaugh comes right to your door for a fast and fun, five minute session, from a safe social distance, providing a life-long memory of your family at your home, a record of history.

When Chief Master Sgt. Edward Wagner, 180th Fighter Wing Command Chief, heard about Rumbaugh's project, he signed up for a session, not only to support the community, but as a way to connect with family and friends on social media.

"I don't think that social distancing stops our engagement with each other," Wagner said. "I thought this was a really great idea, not only to help Nathan and the United Way, but also because these pictures are connecting our community."

"We are social animals so we have to find other ways to connect with our family, friends, and coworkers,"

Wagner continued. "Just go on Facebook and look at all of the positive comments about the simple act of having your photo taken on your front steps."

Waiving the normal sitting fees for family photo sessions, Rumbaugh is simply asking for families to make a donation through his website to help him reach his goal of \$10,000.

"We're already halfway to our goal, with \$5,400 raised already," said Rumbaugh. We just kicked the project off about two weeks ago."

The United Way's Emergency Response Fund was developed to address ongoing, and emerging, health and human service needs, as COVID-19 continues to impact every corner of the community.

"We are incredibly proud to have already raised over \$300,000 for this fund," said Pestrue "In the next month, we hope to invest \$100,000

in total to tackle food insecurity, as pantries and meal service entities manage unprecedented numbers of those seeking nutrition resources. We have to get resources out to those who can improve food security through new or existing programs, so that we can focus on the next chapter of community needs and then the chapter after that. Donations, like Nathan's, will help move our work forward."

Not only are Northwest Ohio families rushing to sign up for their Toledo Front Steps Project photo sessions, local small businesses are now joining the cause, showing support of the communities that support their businesses.

Retired Ohio National Guard members and owners of the Flying Joe Coffee Shop, Lt. Col. John Ohm and Lt. Col. Becky Ohm, were one

Continued on pg. 39



Fairwell and Welcome: Retirements bring changes to wing leadership

As two members of the 180th Fighter Wing leadership team retire, our Stinger Airmen, bid farewell and welcome new leaders across the wing.

Col. William Giezie, Vice Wing Commander, retired June 6, 2020, during an official ceremony, closing out his 30 year career, where he served in both the Army and Air National Guard.

Col. Randall Ortiz assumed the Vice Commander position, in May, leaving his recent position as Maintenance Group Commander, where he served for five years. Commissioning in 1991, Ortiz brings a wealth of experience after serving in several leadership positions throughout the maintenance group, including field maintenance officer in charge, sortie generation flight officer in charge, aircraft maintenance squadron commander and deputy maintenance group commander.

Replacing Ortiz as Maintenance Group Commander is Col. Chad Holesko. Holesko is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot assigned to the wing. Holesko assumes command of the group after serving 21 years as the Deputy Maintenance Group Commander.

Retiring after 33 years of service in both the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard, the wing's senior enlisted advisor, Command Chief Master Sgt. Edward Wagner, celebrated his retirement during an official ceremony, May 17.

Prior to his retirement ceremony, Wagner relinquished authority of the position to Chief Master Sgt. James Duty, during an official change of authority ceremony. Duty brings 40 years of experience and knowledge, serving in both the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard.

Please join us in congratulating the colonels and chiefs. 🇺🇸



Ohio National Guard on front lines during COVID-19 pandemic:

Soldiers, Airmen provide medical assistance at federal prison

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

From blizzards to hurricanes, from east coast to west coast, and anything in between, members of the National Guard answer the call each time our nation is in need.

Today, as COVID-19 continues to grip America, more than 45,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are deployed to every state, three U.S. territories and the District of Columbia, supporting their communities — caring for citizens in need, and helping to slow the spread of this deadly virus.

In Ohio, more than 700 Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen have stepped up to the front lines of this fight to protect Ohioans by providing manpower, unique skill sets, specialized military training and knowledge to the communities hit hardest by COVID-19. The Ohio National Guard has provided teams of Soldiers and Airmen to feed Ohioans at regional and local food banks, collect and distribute critical personal protective equipment, analyze the threat and spread of the virus, and assess facilities for potential use as alternate medical sites and even support prisons, helping where it is needed.

At the request of Gov. Mike DeWine, beginning April 6, more than 40 Ohio National Guard medical professionals spent 20 days supporting the Federal Correctional

Institution Elkton, in Columbiana County, with medical services and equipment. While the facility is the only federal correctional institute in the state, the need was immediate and the Ohio National Guard answered the governor's call, responding rapidly to provide help, filling critical staffing gaps until additional federal resources could arrive.

Lt. Col. Kyle Erford, a nurse assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing's Medical Group and COVID-19 incident commander at a local-area hospital, knew it wasn't a question of if Ohio National Guard medical technicians would be activated, but when.

"I had discussed the possibility of being activated with my family," Erford said. "I received a call just before 9 a.m. and three hours later I reported for duty, ready to support Operation Steady Resolve."

FCI Elkton, which was already operating with half of the required medical staff members before the National Guard support arrived, was one of Ohio's first correctional institutions to feel the harsh impact caused by the spread of the coronavirus. The role of the Ohio National Guard medical support team was to supplement the facility's in-house medical team by providing mission essential tasks, including

patient triage and in-house patient care to reduce the number of inmates being transferred to local hospitals and mitigate the spread.

"We were there to help reduce the spread by testing and isolating patients as necessary," said Maj. Cameron Evans, clinical standards officer for the Ohio National Guard. "We helped to alleviate stress on the facility staff and the local hospitals and provided a bridge to additional intermediate care right inside of the facility."

Additionally, the diverse skill set of the team expanded and enhanced medical care within the facility, including direct patient contact, support functions to ensure the safe, timely and expert care of patients, and care and safety of the medical staff. The team brought in physicians, physician assistants, nurses, medics and supply support members, each with unique roles to fill.

Supply support team members were dedicated to the safety of the physicians and nurses by ensuring personal protective equipment was readily available and that each suit and mask fit properly before each shift, to prevent infection of the highly contagious virus.

The nursing staff provided supportive care for both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients,

including medication distribution, monitoring of patient vitals and providing basic treatments such as oxygen therapy, when needed.

Physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners evaluated the health status of patients, developed treatment plans and ordered tests necessary to bring patients back to good health, before they were cleared to reintegrate back into the population.

"The National Guard is uniquely qualified for medical care in a variety of settings," Erford said. "We train for both war and peacetime missions, and while providing care in an environment like this isn't something we traditionally prepare for, our skills and knowledge are relevant to this setting. I had previous civilian experience working as a nurse for the Lima Correctional Institution, and that experience also prepared me for this mission."

Maj. Natalie Diltz, a physician assistant assigned to the 178th Wing and an emergency medicine physician assistant at a local-area hospital, knew the team's medical knowledge and experience would be beneficial to the mission and the

prison's medical staff.

"Our involvement was critical to help plateau the transmission of COVID-19 throughout the facility," Diltz said. "But, we were also able to aid in decreasing the number of inmate admissions at surrounding hospitals, by providing in-house patient care."

The additional medical support within the facility allowed for more patients, including those not infected with COVID-19 to be treated onsite, only transporting those with acute symptoms to local-area hospitals. This allowed for hospitals to preserve resources and bed space for patients with severe symptoms.

"We were a joint team, operating in a joint environment," said Col. James Parry, deputy state surgeon for the Ohio Air National Guard. "Our Soldiers and Airmen worked alongside our civilian counterparts to mitigate the spread of this disease. We brought with us the capacity and the medical expertise to assist with daily virus screening, testing and in-house treatment."

Throughout the mission, the Ohio National Guard medical team provided 24-hour support,

spending more than 4,000 man-hours assisting the prison medical staff. The medical team released its final patient April 24, as the mission concluded.

While the mission at Elkton is over, fellow Ohio National Guard members continue to help several hard-hit prison systems across the state. Soldiers and Airmen are currently helping with medical and operational support at Pickaway Correctional Institution in Orient, Marion Correctional Institution in Marion and the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville.

"From the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak in Ohio, we've known our support could be requested for a variety of unique missions," said Maj. Gen. John C. Harris Jr., Ohio adjutant general. "Our medical team provided excellent care for the inmates at ELKTON

the federal correctional institution in Columbiana County. I can't say enough about our Guard members' professionalism during this mission." 🇺🇸



A man in a military uniform is working at a desk, looking down at a shipping label. The background is a blurred office or warehouse setting with various equipment and supplies.

It Won't Go Without TMO

Story by Senior Airman Kregg York

It won't go without TMO, a motto that the Airmen at the 180th Fighter Wing Traffic Management Office prove to be true every day. TMO at the 180th Fighter Wing is seldom mentioned, but it plays a huge role in making sure the Wing can fulfill the mission.

"Everything that comes to this unit comes through our doors, and if it's going out from this unit, it's going out our doors," said Tech. Sgt. Rodney Degrie, a traffic management specialist. "So, it's like we're a central hub."

Anytime someone on base orders equipment or parts to help them achieve the mission, it gets shipped to the base. Whenever anything is shipped to the base, it goes through TMO.

"Hazards, explosives, weapons, clothing, everything," said Staff Sgt. Raven Driftmyer, a traffic management specialist.

Once a shipment is received, TMO Airmen get to work unloading and sorting.

"First we separate mission requirement items and low

priorities," Driftmyer said. "If it's a mission requirement, we need to get it out as quickly as possible to get it to the flight line, if it's a part for a jet. We open it, we check the stock number and we check the tags to make sure it's the right item. After we do that, we assign it to the correct location, we fill out the paperwork and then we set it on a shelf for one of the vehicle operators to deliver."

Along with receiving packages, TMO also sends items out, including equipment needed on deployments,

Continued on pg. 22

TMO from pg. 20

from wrenches and weapons to aircraft and Airmen.

“In addition to all of the cargo moving stuff, we also handle passenger travel: Airline travel, getting people to and from stateside deployments,” said Master Sgt. Lewis Smith, traffic management supervisor at the 180FW. “We even send people to basic training.”

During a deployment, whether it’s a stateside deployment or disaster relief, a lot of cargo and Airmen have to be moved across the world. In 2019 alone, more than 360 thousand pounds of cargo and 350 Airmen were sent around the world, from the 180FW alone. At times, everything needs moved without much notice. The Ohio National Guard can be anywhere in the world within 72 hours. That’s 72 hours for TMO to get all of the Airmen, their equipment and planes to wherever they need to be.

“Years ago, we were directly involved in supporting the 200th RED HORSE Squadron deploying to Haiti for the relief missions down there,” Smith said. “We were notified, and less than 24 hours later, C-17s

started landing, and for 72 hours straight, we were processing cargo and personnel, loading planes and releasing them. Processing, loading and releasing.”

Smith also said that after supporting the 200th RED HORSE deployment, he was confident that in any emergency, they could get the job done.

“Our function is, ultimately, to get those jets and those pilots and those maintainers to the fight so they can get their job done,” Smith said. “If it needs moved, people or stuff, we move it.”

“If we’re doing our job perfectly, you’ll never know we were there. But if something goes wrong, we’re the first ones you come to,” Smith said. “That’s satisfying. If we’re not here and things are going sideways, that tells you that our contribution means something, and I like that.”

“The Airmen in the Traffic Management Office continually move items to keep mission readiness afloat,” said Maj. Melanie Grosjean, 180FW Logistics Readiness Squadron commander. “The overall mission of the Air Force would fail if we did not have the Traffic Management Office to keep transportation pipeline activities moving efficiently and effectively for the Warfighter.”

Though most people think of the pilots and maintainers first, the Airmen of TMO prove every day that without them, planes don’t launch, Airmen can’t get to where they’re needed most, and the Air Force can’t execute the mission. Whether it’s response to a disaster, growing tensions overseas or assisting allies, the Air Force can quickly be anywhere around the world, thanks to the Airmen in TMO.



Live Fire Training

Firefighters Hone Life-saving Skills

Photos by Senior Airman Kregg York

Firefighters, assigned to the Ohio National Guard’s 180th Fighter Wing, extinguish controlled fires during an exercise at the Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio, May 19, 2020. The exercise consisted of firefighters attempting to extinguish controlled fires in a variety of scenarios they may experience, including engine fires, burning fuselages and burning trails of gas. Training for diverse, real-world scenarios ensures Airmen are fully trained, qualified, prepared and ready to deploy world-wide at all times.



180FW Ready When Called: Stingers Provide COVID-19 Relief to NW Ohio

Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker and Senior Airman Kregg York

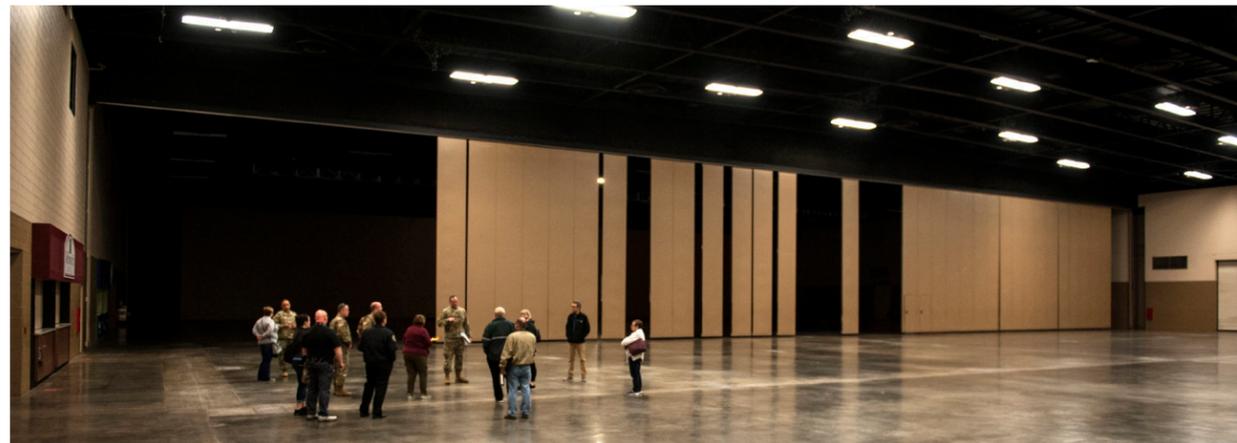
As reports of COVID-19 began to spread and cities across the country began to shut down in early 2020 to prevent the spread of the disease, Ohio governor, Mike DeWine, activated the Ohio National Guard to provide support for those communities hit the hardest.

Since the beginning of March, 60 members of the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing have stepped up to assist in a variety of roles from supporting food banks in the fight against hunger, providing medical and security assistance in state and federal correctional facilities, to assisting the Ohio Department of Health in the testing of Ohio's elderly

in hard-hit long-term care facilities.

Across Ohio, more than 700 Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen have stepped up, in the past months, to the front lines of this fight to protect Ohioans by providing manpower, unique skill sets, specialized military training and knowledge to the communities throughout Ohio. The Ohio National Guard has also provided teams of Soldiers and Airmen to collect and distribute critical personal protective equipment, analyze the threat and spread of the virus, assess facilities for potential use as alternate medical sites and even support prisons, helping where it is needed. 🇺🇸





Life-long Struggles bring Life-changing Opportunities

180FW Airman dedicates self to
helping others achieve health and
fitness goals

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker



“I want to spend my life helping others see past their restrictive eating patterns and gain true health.”

A life-long struggle with eating disorders, including anorexia, orthorexia and serious food preoccupation, has become a life-changing opportunity for one Airman assigned to the Ohio National Guard’s 180th Fighter Wing.

“I struggled for many years with disordered eating,” said Master Sgt. Ariel McVicker, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 180FW fitness assessment team. “I went on my first diet in sixth grade. I began limiting my

intake of certain foods, but it grew into a serious food preoccupation and eventually into anorexia.”

According to the National Eating Disorders Association, eating disorders are serious, but treatable mental and physical illnesses that can affect people of any age, gender, race or religion.

The NEDA estimates that nearly 20 million women and 10 million men suffer from an eating disorder at some point in their lives.

What began as another way to feed her obsession with food control,

McVicker enrolled at Bowling Green State University in 2015 in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics, ended in the a tough realization about her own health, the knowledge needed to overcome her struggles and the ability to educate and assist others.

“As a fitness professional, it was easy to mask my habits under the guise of healthy, by seeming to be dedicated and committed,” said McVicker. “But, after a couple of years in the program, I was able to see my problem for what it was

and learned the damage I was inflicting upon my mental health and my body.”

“I can say confidently now, that I have recovered completely from this,” said McVicker. “I want to spend my life helping others see past their restrictive eating patterns and gain true health.”

Graduating in 2019 with her degree in Nutrition and Dietetics, McVicker is taking the next steps in her goals of helping others.

While working toward earning official certification as a Registered Dietitian, McVicker also owns a small business as a private personal fitness trainer, designing programs and working with clients in both online and in-person environments, to help each meet their personal health and fitness goals.

“I have earned my degree and I’m currently applying for internships

as my next step,” McVicker said. “To become a Registered Dietitian, I need to complete 1,200 hours of unpaid internship work, pass a dietitian registration exam and gain licensure in the state of practice, along with maintaining annual continuing education requirements.”

“As a future Registered Dietitian, I will get the opportunity to educate and treat people with various diseases and medical conditions, based on their individual needs,” McVicker explained.

Now, armed with knowledge acquired through her degree program and the tough lessons learned throughout her battle, McVicker is committed not only to improving her life, but also the lives of her fellow Airmen.

Her education, coupled with her role as NCOIC of the fitness assessment team, allows McVicker

direct interaction with the more than 1,000 Airmen assigned to the 180FW as they complete annual fitness testing requirements.

“As a certified Air Force Fitness Specialist, I currently get to work with our Airmen here at the 180th to help them improve their physical fitness,” said McVicker. “Now, I can also work with them, teaching them how to better plan and shop for foods, and prepare healthy meals that support their individual lifestyles.”

The U.S. Air Force has deemed physical wellness as one of the four pillars of wellness and resiliency, focused on ensuring Airmen throughout the force are ready for the warfight.

“We know that if an Airman isn’t ready, our mission will suffer,” said McVicker. “Supporting our Airmen

Continued on pg. 32



STRUGGLES from pg. 31

to be best prepared, mentally, physically and on the wellbeing front is vital to their performance and outlook. A lifestyle that receives adequate nutrition, exercise, sleep and enjoyment helps to ensure our Airmen are fit to fight.”

While there are many components to ensuring Airmen readiness, the Air Force fitness assessment is a key requirement and is directly linked to an Airman’s combat readiness.

Often identified as one of the largest stressors for Airmen across the force, the assessment is conducted annually in the Air National Guard, and is comprised of three specific criteria. First, is body composition, which is evaluated by abdominal circumference measurements. Second, is muscular fitness, evaluated by the number of push-ups and sit-ups completed within a one-minute timeframe for each. Lastly, is the aerobic component, which is evaluated by a timed 1.5 mile run.

“We have Airmen who go to great lengths to get a good score on the abdominal circumference, because it counts for 20% of the test,” Chief

Master Sgt. of the Air Force, Kaleth Wright, said in a speech at the 2019 Air, Space and Cyber Conference in 2019.

“Our bodies are brilliant, complex, advanced machines,”McVicker said. “There is so much going on in there than just calories in and calories out. I have learned so much about nutrient and drug interactions and how our bodies function with the support or lack of certain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.”

U.S. Air Force Dietitian, Sandra Stuart, emphasized in a 2019 article, that the building blocks that ensure Airmen are healthy and fit to fight, starts with what they put on their plate. Stuart also highlighted that including mindful eating and nutrition with exercise will help maximize overall fitness and serves as a cornerstone of Airmen being at the top of their game.

“Dietetics is not only the study of food,” McVicker explained. “I can help Airmen navigate their best course of action with it comes to supporting their health goals and fitness activities and plans.”

While on duty, in addition

to administering the fitness assessments, McVicker dedicates time to educating 180FW Airmen on the importance of proper nutrition and fitness, in both one-on-one and group settings.

“Every chance I get, I try to impart some nutrition knowledge,” said McVicker. “Whether it is in the form of one-on-one nutrition counseling with Airmen, trying to dispel misinformation on what our diet culture touts as healthy, like fad diets, or helping Airmen develop a sound fitness plan. My job is to advocate for those that do not have advanced understanding of biochemical mechanisms of the human body.”

Once she earns her certification and state licenses, McVicker plans to become an official military dietitian in an effort to continue serving military members and veterans.

“My goal is to serve in a clinical setting or a community-based program,” said McVicker. “Helping military members live their best life will be my greatest satisfaction.”

Avionics from pg. 5

The difference between me right now and where I want to be, is taking that first step of faith in that direction.”

Though he is fulltime with the wing, Bynum is also taking advantage of the Air National Guard’s 100% paid tuition and monthly G.I. Bill stipend education benefits to pursue his future goal of earning a four-year degree.

Bynum is enrolled at the University of Toledo in 2021, majoring in Pre-Med Neuroscience, and plans to graduate in 2025.

“I put a lot of pressure on myself to make things happen and to succeed,” said Bynum. “My number

one goal right now is to finish my degree and within the next five years, I plan to pursue a commissioning opportunity and become an officer.”

As Bynum continues striving to meet both his personal and military goals, he urges anyone considering a career in the aviation industry to consider the Air National Guard.

“Aviation will continue to grow in the future,” said Bynum. “There are so many great and different opportunities to work on many different aircraft and so many different locations.”



Gen. Josephy Lyngel Visits 180th Fighter Wing

Photos by Senior Airman Kregg York

Gen. Joseph Lengyel, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, visited the 180FW, May 6, 2020, to learn more about its operations and impacts on the nation. While visiting the Ohio-based Air National Guard unit, Lengyel received an up-close look at the wing’s best programs including Defense Support to Civil Authorities and the wing’s top performing Aerospace Control Alert mission.





Healthy Vision Enhances Warfighter Health and Readiness

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

“**E**at your carrots, or your eyes will go bad,” is an age-old myth passed down from generation to generation, as a way to encourage children to eat more vegetables, but is it true?

According to the CDC, while carrots are high in vitamin A, a nutrient essential for good vision, increasing your carrot intake will not single-handedly keep your eyes healthy.

“Staying healthy, in general, is important for your overall eye health,” said Capt. Jill Holler, an optometrist assigned to the Ohio National Guard’s 180th Fighter Wing. “There are many correlations of overall health and vision threatening conditions. Healthy vision starts with how you take care of yourself.”

There are many steps you can take to keep your eyes healthy and

protect your vision, and eating right is at the top of the CDC’s list, including plenty of dark leafy greens, fish, and of course, carrots.

For Holler, who began wearing glasses at a young age, the human eye has always fascinated her and, because of her own poor vision, played a significant impact in her decision to pursue optometry as a career.

“Once I started wearing glasses in the first grade, I was intrigued with the magic of how great I could suddenly see with just these little pieces of plastic in front of my eyes,” Holler said. “In high school, I shadowed several local optometrists, and I knew immediately that this is what I wanted to do.”

As an optometrist assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, Holler’s primary role is to manage vision

programs, oversee specific career field vision standards and provide education and assistance in vision conservation.

“I provide vision screenings for unit members during their annual physical health assessments and for those requiring additional screenings in accordance with occupational health standards,” Holler said. “As part of these programs, I am also responsible for managing the Aircrew Soft Contact Lens program for our pilots, measure and order spectacles and gas mask insert lenses for members who require them, and train our medics in vision screening procedures.”

“Vision and eye care is important for everyone, but even more so for military personnel,” Holler said. “Many military careers have specific vision standards that must be met in



order to maintain military readiness capabilities.”

Those who wear glasses or have minor vision conditions can still serve in most jobs across the U.S. Air Force, but there are some career paths that require Airmen to meet strict vision standards.

Initial, career qualifying, medical and vision screenings are conducted prior to enlistment at the Military Entrance Processing Station, commonly referred to as MEPS, in an effort to determine career fields individuals qualify for.

“Some conditions, such as color blindness or depth perception issues, can limit career options, such as aviation, ammunitions, or even public affairs,” said Holler. “But, while there are some duty limiting or disqualifying vision conditions, most people can serve so long as the basic vision standards are met, or if vision can be corrected with

glasses, contact lenses or even with a Lasik procedure.”

For members currently serving, regular vision screenings are conducted to ensure required standards are met and to assist members in maintaining healthy vision by providing resources such as safety information and personal protective equipment needed to enhance vision conservation.

Healthy vision is not only important to one’s overall health, but also to each Airman’s Individual Medical Readiness, or IMR. IMR statistics are monitored and tracked in order to provide commanders, at the local-level and up through the Department of Defense, with a real-time snapshot of warfighter capabilities and readiness across the globe.

“Taking steps to maintain healthy vision should be a top priority for every Airman,” Holler said. “Healthy

vision directly correlates to your whole body health, but it doesn’t just affect you, it also impacts your Wingmen, your unit and the Air Force.”

Additional steps to ensure healthy vision include knowing your family’s eye health history, getting regular comprehensive eye exams, maintaining a healthy weight, wearing protective eye wear when needed, at work or home, and sunglasses when outdoors.

“Be sure to get annual comprehensive eye exams,” said Holler. “Even if you don’t feel you need glasses or a corrective procedure, and protect your eyes. Wear eye protection when needed, in the workplace, at home when working in the yard or making repairs. Even when playing sports.” 🦋

PROMOTIONS & RETIREMENTS

To Airman:

- Jordan S. Mohler - Operations Support Squadron
- Max H. Walters - Civil Engineer Squadron

To Airman First Class:

- Jacob J. Benson - Logistics readiness Squadron
- Kyle B. Davis - Communications Flight
- Reyes A. Garcia - Civil Engineer Squadron
- Hannah E. Haviland - Medical Group
- Romeo P. Martinez - Comptroller Flight
- Justin M. McCamey - Maintenance Squadron
- Connor O. Myers - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

To Senior Airman:

- Katie L. Badenhop - Force Support Squadron
- Caleb J. Baus - Maintenance Squadron
- Koran M. Brillon - Civil Engineer Squadron
- Brittany L. Camacho - Security Forces Squadron
- Robert D. Cornwell - Maintenance Squadron
- Kaitlyn M. Cramer - Maintenance Squadron
- Andrew J. Gyurasics - Maintenance Squadron
- Cari R. Hess - Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Gabriel D. Humason - Maintenance Squadron
- Justin M. Lutz - Maintenance Squadron
- Michelle M. Morrison - Civil Engineer Squadron
- Catherine E. Moses - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Tristen J. Rodriguez - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Ariana M. Sauerwein - Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Logan W. Stultz - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Thomas C. Schnitker - Civil Engineer Squadron
- Noah P. Tegtmeier - Maintenance Squadron
- Lucas E. Vermilyea - Maintenance Squadron
- Claire E. Weber - Force Support Squadron

To Staff Sergeant:

- Kris M. Boysel - Civil Engineer Squadron
- Justin T. Busch - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Autumn M. Case - Operations Support Squadron
- Raven Driftmyer - Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Destinie P. Geiger - Medical Group
- Andrew J. Irwin - Maintenance Squadron
- Ronald R. Johnson - Maintenance Squadron
- Kyle J. Knox - Security Forces Squadron
- Connor B. Phillips - Maintenance Squadron
- Zachariah J. Ramos - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Kyle J. Reed - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Lamar K. Smith - Civil Engineer Squadron
- Joshua A. Straka - Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Justin S. Urbanczyk - Communications Flight
- David A. Watson - Maintenance Squadron

To Technical Sergeant:

- Dylan J. Cleghorn - Civil Engineer Squadron
- Tyler J. Fargo - Maintenance Squadron
- Joel M. Figmaka - Maintenance Squadron
- Nicholas Geiger - Fighter Squadron

- Delaney L. Preston - Medical Group
- Jessica A. Thebeau - Maintenance Squadron
- Andrea R. Villegas - Civil Engineer Squadron

To Master Sergeant:

- Brent S. Cartwright - Logistics readiness Squadron
- Jessica L. Hagerty - Maintenance Group
- Cathleen M. Kania - Security Forces Squadron
- Nathan J. Phillips - Maintenance Squadron
- Marc. P. Robertson - Security Forces Squadron
- Kristi A. White - Logistics Readiness Squadron

To Senior Master Sergeant:

- Phillip J. Chrysler - Security Forces Squadron
- Norman J. Drzewiecki - Communications Flight
- Christopher Gonzales - Mission Support Group
- Christopher J. Jerrell - Maintenance Squadron
- William C. Lowinski - Fighter Wing
- Willaim D. Sparks - Fighter Wing

To Chief Master Sergeant:

- Timothy L. Golden - Maintenance Squadron
- Brian K. McCormick - Maintenance Group
- Nicholas A. Muir - Security Forces Squadron

To 1st Lieutenant:

- Andrew Youngberg - Maintenance Group
- Brandon Cole - Maintenance Group

To Captain:

- Ryan Lamy, Maintenance Group

To Colonel:

- Chad Holesko, Maintenance Group

Retirements:

- Robert Baker, Senior Master Sgt.
- Starlet Braxton, Tech. Sgt.
- Donald Calkins, Master Sgt.
- Mark Cramer, Master Sgt.
- Carrie Cufu, Master Sgt.
- Sean Lolo, Senior Master Sgt.
- John Madison, Master Sgt.
- Ann McCormick, Master Sgt.
- Edmund Poitinger, Senior Master Sgt.
- Harry Reynolds, Lt. Col.
- Bradley Righettini, Master Sgt.
- Jeffery Tabaka, Master Sgt.
- John Van Horn, Senior Master Sgt.
- Edward Wagner, Chief Master Sgt.
- David Watson, Chief Master Sgt.

End of a Generation from pg. 11

aster Sgt. Mark Cramer has been in the Air Force for more than 40 years, enlisting in 1978. Jimmy Carter was in office, a gallon of gas was 63 cents and the first Garfield comic was published.

“I am probably the oldest certified weapons crew chief at 59 years old.”

Cramer is a weapons loader assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing. But, he’s not just any weapons loader. He is one of the oldest weapons loaders in the entire Air Force.

“Normally, someone of my age is in a supervisory position,” Cramer said. “Less hands-on, and more office work.”

While a supervisory position might suit some people, Cramer would rather keep working with his hands.

“I really enjoy working around the aircraft,” Cramer said. “It’s a lot of fun, especially when the weather is good. There’s not so many personnel issues to deal with.”

As a weapons loader, Cramer makes sure that the weapons systems on the aircraft are in proper working order and ready for the pilots to complete their missions. Being a weapons loader can be strenuous at times, usually making it easier for younger Airmen, but Cramer hasn’t let that stop him.

“It’s hard on the body, working on CRAMER concrete all your life,” Cramer said. “I’ve had some aches and pains, but overall, I’ve been able to do my job without any major health issues.”

Connecting a Community from pg. 15

of the first businesses to sign up.

“The Flying Joe is honored to be part of the Toledo Front Steps Project and help highlight what Nathan and the United Way are doing,” said Becky Ohm, co-owner of the Flying Joe. “We hope that this helps spread the word of the need in our community and the positive things people are doing to help.”

Nearing the halfway mark for his donation goal, Rumbaugh has already completed 80 sessions and has more than 50 scheduled throughout the rest of April, and more requests coming in each day.

“I am just blown away with the community response and excitement for this project,” Rumbaugh said. “I am smiling at the end of each day because it is so great to see the community coming together to support

While he may not have a supervisory role, Cramer still has many responsibilities.

“My additional duty is a training monitor,” Cramer said, “so I get to interact a lot with the kids coming out of technical school. I get them started with their military training and make sure all their tasks they’re required to do to get their 5-level are done. They bring a lot of energy in. It’s a very satisfying job.”

With more than 40 years of experience, Cramer has many lessons he can pass down to younger Airmen. The most important of which, he says, is to work hard.

“I like to have a good work ethic,” Cramer said. “Do your job, and things will go a lot better.”

Being a weapons loader may be difficult, but it can also be very rewarding. Cramer says that the best part of his job is the satisfaction of being able to provide what the operations calls for.

“It’s time for me to retire, but I’m gonna miss it,” Cramer said. “I think I’ll miss the comradery the most. The young people bring a lot of energy to the unit. That’s a constant change. People like me retire and new people come in. That’s just the way of life.” 🍷

the community.”

“We are so grateful for Nathan’s work,” Pestruie said. “The Front Steps Project is such a unique one. It’s bringing families out of their homes and putting smiles on faces during a difficult time. That alone is incredibly special.”

“Nathan is such a giving person and his willingness to donate his time for people in need is an inspiration to all of us,” said Ohm.

100% of the donations to the Toledo Front Steps Project will go directly to the United Way of Greater Toledo. 🍷

ALWAYS ON MISSION



180th Fighter Wing

2660 S. Eber Rd.

Swanton, Ohio

(419) 868-4250

<http://www.180fw.ang.af.mil/>

Follow us

 180th Fighter Wing

 @180thFW

 @180fw